

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021



Responding to a Growing Need

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CAITLIN SLY



Our lives have changed dramatically because of Covid-19. We have learned how to live our professional lives from a home office as we interact through Zoom calls. More importantly, we have learned how to connect with friends and loved ones, as we developed a greater appreciation for what we have and for those who touch our lives. At Meals on

Wheels Diablo Region, we have learned a great deal as well, many things encouraging, but others that raise concerns.

On a positive note, it has been inspiring to see the resilience and creativity of our staff and volunteers who quickly developed new ways of meeting growing needs. But the pandemic also has made clear how many elders in our community are food insecure, and how fragile their support system is. We can see the demand for meals and services will continue to grow as many seniors are still struggling. This growing need

strengthened our resolve to provide for our aging community when they need us most.

I am proud that this past year, we kept up with the need for healthy food by delivering over a half a million meals! Even though we served 40% more clients and created 9 more routes, no one missed a meal.

We saw first-hand the gaps that needed to be filled and we made sure our seniors were nourished, safe, and less isolated. With the support of community members like you, we were able to develop programs that ensure the seniors we serve can remain at home with dignity.

Last year, we delivered during a time of crisis. In this year's Annual Report, you will see how we continue to meet increasing needs. Thanks to our staff, volunteers, and donors, we can be there for our growing senior population, now and into the future. Many thanks to you for making this possible!

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



NUTRITION

We delivered over 500,000 meals this past year, as seniors remained affected by the pandemic. To safely provide service, we began delivering weekly frozen meals, and partnered with County Connection buses to transport volunteers and food coolers to our clients. Our Breakfast Bag program expanded beyond Brentwood to include Antioch, Brentwood, Bay Point, Bethel Island, Concord, Martinez, Pittsburg, and Oakley allowing us to deliver nearly 45,000 breakfasts. Our Grocery Bag Program was also extended to Walnut Creek, Martinez, Concord, Oakley, Brentwood, Antioch, and Pittsburg. While our Cafés were closed to in-person dining, Café clients received either home delivered meals or picked up meals at the Café locations. By expanding our programs and delivering more meals MOW Diablo Region prevented seniors from going hungry, in spite of the obstacles presented by the pandemic.



CARE MANAGEMENT

Covid-19 continued to wreak havoc in the lives of so many of the elders we serve. The Care Management team helped this vulnerable population with depression, evictions, elder abuse, and a myriad of other issues. We provided services to close to 800 clients, an increase of 17% from the previous year. Care Management also purchased 30 Uber gift cards to help clients with no means of transportation to get to doctor's appointments. Weighted blankets were distributed to clients who suffer from restless leg syndrome and anxiety, extension grabbers helped seniors who have mobility and range of motion limitations, and medical alert devices without a monthly fee were given to seniors so they can access help in case of a fall or emergency.



FALL PREVENTION

This year, requests for home safety modifications dramatically increased due to the impact of the pandemic on older adults. The program provided 107% more safety assessments and served 228 households, more than doubling the amount of support we provided the previous year. Unfortunately, the pandemic restricted in-person education and exercises classes so we provided presentations over Zoom throughout the year. We also secured funding for the purchase of electronic tablets and began offering tablet technology training to the people we serve.



FRIENDLY VISITORS, CALLERS, AND HELPERS

We prevented social isolation, by connecting our clients with volunteers to provide friendship and comfort. Our Friendly Callers made 13,770 calls to over 200 seniors. By expanding the Friendly Helper program, we assisted seniors with grocery and pharmacy pickup as well as transportation to appointments throughout the County. Over 44 Friendly Helper Volunteers ran 239 errands last year.



HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Covid-19 continued to present challenges to resuming our exercise classes, but with creativity and the ability to hold outdoor classes, we were able to provide 14 different classes to 183 seniors. Our Bingocize® classes were held online and over the phone. Our Walk with Ease and Tai Chi classes were held outdoors, ensuring seniors remain active and engaged during this difficult time.

OUR MISSION

We enhance the lives of older adults who have a full range of needs by providing coordinated care, enabling them to live independently and with dignity for as long as possible.

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We'd also like to thank our individual donors for their generous support!

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Walnut Creek National Charity League

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KEEPING HER HOME, KEEPING HER “YOUNG”

Lucille doesn't know the secret of reaching 101 years old, probably because she has always remained busy and positive, even in times of adversity.

Early in her life, she and her husband bought a large swath of land in their native Nicaragua. “There was nothing on it, but we built a coconut farm.” The farm eventually employed hundreds of people. Lucille worked as a health educator, teaching women the importance of good nutrition. She taught Sunday school and basic life skills to the children. In 1978, her world collapsed when Nicaragua fell into a bloody civil war. “The Communists came to my home,” explains Lucille, “They said this is the house we want. You have to leave.”

Lucille and her husband took very few possessions when they came to the United States where her daughter Rose lived. She made a home in Pittsburg and decided to give back. She helped Spanish-speaking seniors with their taxes and taught knitting. She was active in her church and still attends services, but many of the friends she made are gone. Now the staff and volunteers from Meals on Wheels Diablo Region have become her social circle. She receives meals and caring

conversation from her delivery volunteer. Through our Fall Prevention Program, she had grab bars and a railing installed, as well as a bedside commode and nightlight. Lucille appreciates the follow-up the Fall Prevention staff provide to make sure she remains safe at home. She is especially thankful to her Friendly Visitor, Cindy. Lucille shares stories about her life and looks forward to hearing about Cindy's life, too. Sometimes they even take walks and do simple exercises. “I don't know what I would do without Meals on Wheels Diablo Region,” says Lucille. “They are all wonderful.”



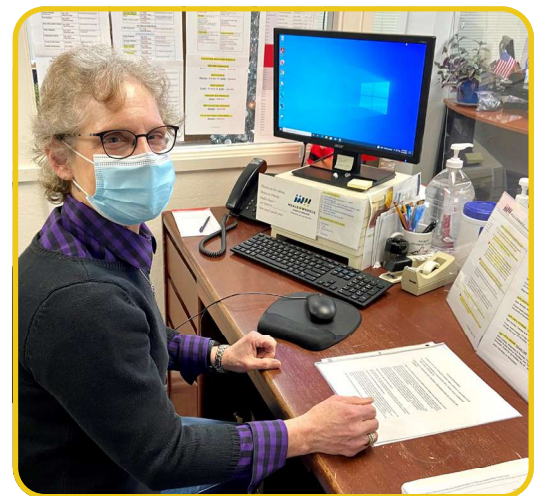
GIVING BACK IN SO MANY WAYS

Volunteers are the hearts and hands of our organization, and that includes volunteers like Tammy Williamson who helps in our office. After retiring from a successful career in Project Management for Chevron, Tammy said she couldn't “sit still” and was hungry to do something for her community.

She became a volunteer for MOW Diablo Region in 2019 and performs a multitude of tasks from answering phones to working on larger projects like helping refine the volunteer application intake process, helping to write a style guide for our donor database, and even keeping the emergency management plan updated. Tammy also jumped in when the pandemic hit. “It was all hands-on deck as we had to quickly adjust everything to make sure seniors were delivered meals and they, and the volunteers, remained safe,” says Tammy. “I helped out anyway and anywhere I was most needed.”

In addition to volunteering, Tammy recognized a need to give back by becoming a donor. “Like so many MOW Diablo Region clients, my father faced isolation and declining health. I joined the Monthly Giving Circle to ensure that every month my gift would help seniors who depend on MOW Diablo Region's meal delivery and services.”

Tammy's generosity of time and her financial support has made a tremendous impact in the lives of seniors. Her not being able to “sit still” and her desire to help her community, has been a valuable benefit to MOW Diablo Region!



FINANCIALS

REVENUE



PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS





MEETING THE NEEDS IN EAST COUNTY

Through our work with nonprofit partners MOW Diablo Region recognized that many seniors in East Contra Costa County have challenges connecting with important social services. To help us reach underserved elders, Lidia Gutierrez joined MOW Diablo Region as the Older Adult Support Specialist. In this role, she reaches out directly to older adults in East Contra Costa County, many Spanish-speaking, to identify needs and connect them with programs. “When seniors don’t know exactly what is available, or even what they will need to improve their lives and health, it can be very confusing, especially if there is a language barrier,” explains Lidia. “By providing a one-stop coordinated approach, older adults can receive the services they need to live a better, healthier life.”

The initiative is a collaboration between MOW Diablo Region, Choice in Aging, Contra Costa Senior Legal Services, Diablo Valley Foundation for the Aging, and Empowered Aging. It is made possible through the support of the John Muir Community Health Fund.

